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RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 2203
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 9708
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C O N F I D E N T I A L DHAKA 000593

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/02/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINS](#) [MARR](#) [BG](#)
SUBJECT: REPORTED RESHUFFLE OF MILITARY LEADERS COMES AMID
HEIGHTENED POLITICAL UNCERTAINTY

REF: DHAKA 588

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Lt. Gen. Masud Uddin Chowdhury, a key behind-the-scenes player in Bangladesh's increasingly chaotic politics, reportedly has been transferred from his powerful position atop the armed forces administration to head the National Defense College (NDC). Masud has been perceived as the top rival to Chief of Army Staff Gen. Moeen Uddin Ahmed, who is the power behind the temporary Caretaker Government that is preparing for national Parliamentary elections in December. Other senior military officers reportedly have been transferred as well, including the NDC Commandant who is said to be named High Commissioner to Australia. The senior military officer in Chittagong reportedly will replace Masud as Principal Staff Officer of the Armed Forces Division.

12. (C) The reassignment of Masud was reported to the Embassy by one of his friends and confirmed by other sources. There were no immediate reports in the local media. The shuffle follows on the heels of two days of mass arrests of hundreds of people, including many local leaders and activists of the country's two largest parties, the Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). There will be speculation that Masud's transfer is linked to the recent arrests. The Embassy has no credible information on why the transfers took place and will continue to follow developments. It was not immediately clear whether the transfers would affect Masud's position as coordinator of the National Coordination Council, which was established in 2007 to pursue high-profile politicians and businessmen suspected of graft.

Moriarty